

# Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: \_\_\_\_\_ Q. \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ October 18, 2007 \_\_\_\_\_

**Topic:** First Review of a Recommendation of the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure (ABTEL) to Grant Continuing Accreditation to the Teacher Education Program at Ferrum College

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## Origin:

\_\_\_\_\_ Topic presented for information only (no board action required)

☒ Board review required by  
\_\_\_\_\_ State or federal law or regulation  
☒ Board of Education regulation  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

☒ Action requested at this meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ Action requested at future meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

## Previous Review/Action:

☒ No previous board review/action

\_\_\_\_\_ Previous review/action

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Action \_\_\_\_\_

## Background Information:

In the spring of 2004, a review was conducted at Ferrum College under the *Regulations Governing Approved Programs for Virginia Institutions of Higher Education* (effective July 1, 2001, to September 20, 2007). Ferrum College offers endorsement area programs in Elementary Education preK-6, Computer Science, Art preK-12, Career and Technical Education (Business Education and Agricultural Education), English, Journalism (add-on), Foreign Language (Russian and Spanish), History and Social Sciences, Mathematics, Algebra I (add-on), Theater Arts preK-12, Science (Biology and Chemistry) and Health and Physical Education preK-12.

The approved program regulations define the standards that must be met and the review options available for accreditation of teacher education programs. The regulations provide three options for accreditation and program approval:

1. A state review process for which the teacher education program must meet the standards established by Board of Education regulations;

2. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) process for which the teacher education program must meet the Board's teaching area requirements and the NCATE standards; or
3. The Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) process for which the teacher education program must meet the Board's teaching area requirements and the TEAC standards.

In all three options, the institution hosts an on-site visit by a team of trained reviewers that develops a report of findings that is submitted to the Department of Education. After a review of the report of findings, the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure (ABTEL) makes a recommendation to the Board of Education for final action.

The regulations set forth 20 standards in the following four categories:

- I. Program Design;
- II. Faculty;
- III. Candidates; and
- IV. Program Operation/Accountability.

The review team makes a recommendation of "met" or "not met" for each of the 20 standards. In addition, the team makes a recommendation of "approval," "approval with stipulations," or "denial" for the accreditation of the teacher preparation program as a unit.

Ferrum College was reviewed under Option 1—state review process by the Board of Education. The review team found that five of 20 standards were not met. The team recommendation for the program was "approval with stipulations." The designation of "approval with stipulations" indicates that an institution's professional teacher preparation programs met program standards, but significant weaknesses were identified in the unit and/or the specific teaching endorsement areas. Such a designation requires the development of a corrective action plan to address the weaknesses over the next two years.

On January 24, 2005, the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure concurred with the team and recommended "approval with stipulations." At its February 23, 2005, meeting, the Board voted to accept the Advisory Board's and the Superintendent of Public Instruction's recommendation to approve the program with stipulations. Ferrum College was advised to use the original team report as a checklist to develop and implement a detailed plan of corrective action.

### **Summary of Major Elements:**

A follow-up review team visit was made on May 7-8, 2007, to examine documents, data, and other evidence produced to meet the standards designated as unmet during the 2004 review. As a result of the review, the team recommended "approval" of the teacher education program at Ferrum College. At its September 17, 2007, meeting, the Advisory Board concurred with the findings of the review team and recommended to the Board of Education approval of the continuing accreditation of the teacher education program at Ferrum College. Attached is a summary of the five standards that Ferrum College was required to address as well as the findings of the 2007 review team.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education waive first review and approve ABTEL's recommendation to grant continuing accreditation to the teacher education program at Ferrum College.

**Impact on Resources:**

Expenses incurred during the on-site review of teacher education programs are funded by the host institution.

**Timetable for Further Review/Action:**

Programs will be reviewed in accordance with the *Regulations Governing the Review and Approval of Education Programs in Virginia*, effective September 21, 2007.

**Ferrum College  
Summary of Team Findings**

**(Presented to the Board of Education on October 18, 2007)**

The results of the team visits and team recommendations for Ferrum College are listed below.

**Standard 4: The professional education unit ensures that candidates acquire and learn the knowledge and skills to become competent to work with a variety of students.**

**The 2004 review team cited the following weaknesses:**

- There is insufficient evidence that the unit ensures that candidates acquire and learn the knowledge and skills to become competent to work with exceptional learners.
- The unit needs to provide more extensive training in the teaching of reading and language arts, especially to K-12 students who have difficulty learning to read, as well as in the teaching of assessment of student performance, the interpretation of data to direct differentiated instruction, and management of students.

**The 2007 review team cited the following improvements and recommended that the standard be moved from not met to met:**

- Since 2004, the Ferrum College teacher education program has added new courses, revised courses, changed the foci of courses, and added relevant and current materials such as textbooks and Web sites.
- Field experiences have been reorganized and extended. Additionally, the program has enhanced its diversity by adding new counties for field experiences.
- These changes provide the opportunities for teacher candidates to acquire and learn the knowledge and skills, especially in the areas of reading, assessment, and management, to become competent to work with a variety of students.

**Standard 12: The professional education unit ensures that candidates' competence to begin their professional role in schools is assessed prior to completion of the program or recommendation for licensure.**

**The 2004 review team cited the following weaknesses:**

- More complete data for Praxis I and Praxis II assessments are needed.
- Exit criteria for candidates should involve assessments by faculty prior to the student teaching experience; educational competencies are not identified in a manner that is systematically assessed.

**The 2007 review team cited the following improvements and recommended that the standard be moved from not met to met:**

- The Teacher Education Program has set up a series of mechanisms to collect and manage data on Praxis I, Praxis II, and other prescribed assessments.

- Candidates are assessed at multiple points during their program with a variety of assessment tools.
- The data and assessments reflecting educational competencies are used to make decisions regarding retention in and completion of the program.

**Standard 13: The professional education unit recruits, hires, and retains a highly qualified higher education faculty of diverse backgrounds who are teacher scholars, are qualified for their assignment, and are actively engaged in the professional community.**

The **2004** review team cited the following weakness:

- The number of faculty members holding a terminal degree (i.e., earned doctorate) in education is at an unacceptable level to maintain a quality teacher education program.

The **2007** review team cited the following improvements and recommended that the standard be moved from not met to met:

- The number of full-time faculty members has increased from two to four.
- The number of faculty with terminal degrees has increased 100 percent.
- Two regular adjunct faculty members, two full-time instructors with part-time teaching responsibilities in the Teacher Education Program, and five clinical faculty have been hired.

**Standard 15: The professional education unit ensures that there are systematic and comprehensive activities to enhance the competence and intellectual vitality of the professional education faculty.**

The **2004** review team cited the following weakness:

- Institutional support for faculty professional development is minimal. Sufficient monetary support and release/leave time for faculty to participate in professional development activities are not evident in program budget line items.

The **2007** review team cited the following improvements and recommended that the standard be moved from not met to met:

- Professional development funding and overall support at the institutional level for the Teacher Education Program have increased.
- Faculty members have participated in a variety of professional development opportunities.

**Standard 20: The professional education unit has adequate resources to offer quality programs that reflect the mission of the professional education unit and support teaching and scholarship by faculty and candidates.**

The **2004** review team cited the following weakness:

- Faculty offices are not easily accessible to students, nor is there meeting space within the departmental areas for candidates and teacher education faculty.

**The 2007 review team cited the following improvements and recommended that the standard be moved from not met to met:**

- The Teacher Education Program is now housed in recently renovated, accessible space that contains offices, classrooms, meeting areas, and a laboratory that is adequate to offer a quality teacher education program.